The Official Publication of the Alabama Chess Federation

Alabama Chess Antics

Winter 2022

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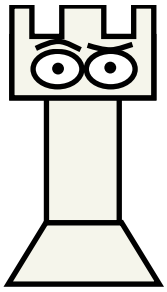
The Queen of Hearts: Fifty Years of Memories

Greetings from the Editor



Welcome, one and all, to a brand new year of *Alabama Chess Antics*. This Winter 2022 issue features reports on recent tournaments from **Caesar Lawrence**, games from the MLK Classic submitted by **Samuel Baskarraj** and **Shane Peters**, annotated Queen of Hearts games by **Henry Hopson** and **Sherwood Dong**, and a heartwarming article with some grandfatherly advice from **Charles Anthony**. Thank you so much for taking the time to submit content to the *Antics*, folks.

The Alabama chess community recently celebrated the 50th consecutive year of the Queen of Hearts, Montgomery's most famous annual event. In keeping with the recent "wave of nostalgia" that the *Antics* has enjoyed for the last few years, I present a special feature called *the Queen of Hearts: Fifty Years of Memories*. (That's right: your editor went on another one of his huge historical research kicks again… I am starting to think I have some kind of problem.) At any rate, I hope you will enjoy this trip down memory lane as much as I did.

By the way: this time, there were so many submissions to the *Antics* that the magazine ballooned to 35 pages, and not all submissions even made it into the finished product. Sorry if your game didn't get published, but maybe next time it will. From my standpoint, having too many articles/games to choose from is a good problem to have, so keep them coming.

The winner of "Game of the Quarter" for this issue is… DeCord-Hopson, annotated by Henry Hopson. If I'm not mistaken, this is the first time a writer from out-of-state has won the *Antics* GoQ award. The winner of "Photo of the Quarter" for this issue is… Charles Anthony, for his unforgettable photo on page 30. Congratulations to both of our winners!

As always, please submit your chess content to the *Antics* editor (at Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com) and help us tell the story of chess in Alabama.

Sincerely,

-Scott Varagona
March 15, 2022

ACF Membership

Any individual may become a **Regular Member** upon the payment of annual dues of **$15.00**. Regular members may enter ACF tournaments and receive special publications or notices from ACF as they are issued. Any chess club seeking to become an **Affiliate** is required to file the Affiliate Information Form with the Secretary of the ACF and pay annual dues of **$35.00**. Benefits of becoming an affiliate include the right to bid to host ACF-sanctioned events, such as the Alabama State Championship, and to receive advertising through the ACF for your tournaments.

Alabama Chess Leaderboard

Top 50 Regular Ratings (retrieved from uschess.org on 3/12/2022)

Only players with rating activity within the past year are listed.

1	IM STUART RACHELS	2605	26	JOEL NICK FRIEDMAN	1902
2	MATTHEW PUCKETT	2287	27	JEFFREY BYRD	1893
3	YURY A BARNAKOV	2271	28	XAVIER BRUNI	1882
4	SCOTT VARAGONA	2258	29	KENNETH W GOODMAN	1880
5	BILL MELVIN	2213	30	MICHAEL W PORCELLI	1870
6	GERALD A LARSON	2133	31	BRIAN C WIGGIN	1862
7	CHIBUZO ILONZE	2128	32	MICHAEL B GUTHRIE	1862
8	ZACHARY ISAAC SNOW II	2121	33	JOSHUA VARNER	1838
9	STEPHEN J GRAVELING	2113	34	JOHN DAUGHERTY	1837
10	AARON DECORD	2104	35	ROBERT LUBIN	1827
11	BRENT INMAN	2095	36	GARY W BAWGUS	1816
12	JONATHAN RASBERRY	2092	37	TIM BOND	1800
13	ANDY REEDER	2075	38	RANDY W COPE	1800
14	TEJAS V THORAT	2066	39	PATRICK DOWD	1799
15	THOMAS J DENTON	2053	40	SAMUEL G BASKARRAJ	1795
16	FARUK ESAT ERGIN	2044	41	JOSHUA WAKEFIELD	1781
17	GEORGE RUSYNIAK	2034	42	BIJAN KHALEGHI	1780
18	CONNOR V LUNNEY	2031	43	VIKHRAM BALAGEE	1761
19	SHERWOOD DONG	2029	44	SARVAGNA VELIDANDLA	1761
20	JEREMIAH F DONAHUE	2000	45	LAWRENCE D FISK	1759
21	CHARLES L MEIDINGER	2000	46	MARIANO RUNCO	1744
22	MILES MELVIN	1984	47	STEVEN PAN	1741
23	WILLIAM DANIEL FOX	1983	48	SAMUEL J HUNT	1737
24	ASHISH ACHARYA	1975	49	DAVID HAYES	1722
25	OM BADHE	1969	50	ALADDIN S LATEEF	1715

Recent Results: Dothan Open & MLK Classic

by Caesar Lawrence

2021 Dothan Open
Dothan, AL; January 8, 2022

Premier Section: Randy Wolfe, Taher Rahgooy, and Henry Hunt tied for 1st place.

Reserve Section: William Owens and Blake Fowler tied for 1st place. Luke Chatel won the U1000 prize.

Above: 2021 Dothan Open prizewinners.

2022 MLK Classic
Helena, AL; January 15, 2022

Henry Hopson (Atlanta) won the Premier section with 3.5 points.

Thomas Gilbreath seems to have found his chess form again. He won the MLK Reserve section with 4 points.

Bishop Herrington won the Amateur section with 4 points. ■

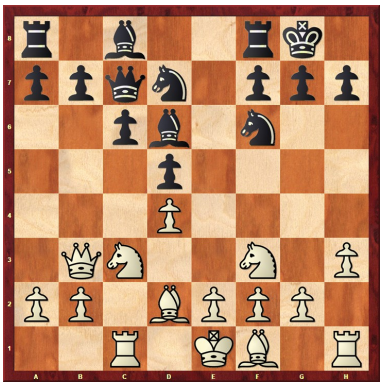
Below: MLK Classic Reserve winner Thomas Gilbreath (left) with TD Caesar Lawrence.

Two MLK Classic Games

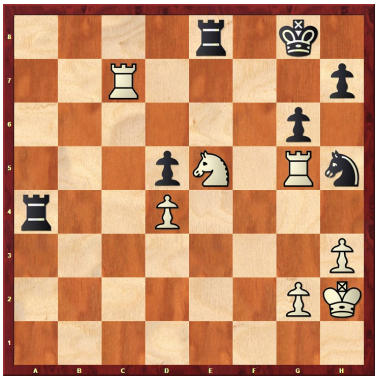
Submitted by Samuel Baskarraj & Shane Peters

S. Baskarraj (1764) - M. Porcelli (1841)
MLK Classic 2022, Round 4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 Nbd7 6.Qb3 Qa5 7.Bd2 Qc7 8.Rc1 Bd6 9.h3 0–0 10.cxd5 exd5



11.Nb5 Qb8 12.Nxd6 Qxd6 13.Bb4 c5 14.dxc5 Qf4 15.e3 Re8 16.Be2 Qc7 17.0–0 a5 18.Qa4 Nf8 19.Bb5 Bd7 20.Bc3 Ne4 21.Bd4 Re6 22.Bxd7 Nxd7 23.b4 Rae8 24.Qxa5 Qxa5 25.bxa5 Ra6 26.Rfd1 Rxa5 27.c6 bxc6 28.Rxc6 Rxa2 29.Rc7 Ndf6 30.Ne5 Nxf2 31.Rf1 N2e4 32.Nxf7 Ra6 33.Ne5 Ng3 34.Rf3 Ne2+ 35.Kh2 Nxd4 36.exd4 Ra4 37.Rg3 Nh5 38.Rg5 g6



39.Nxg6 hxg6 40.Rxg6+ Kf8 41.Rh6 Re7 42.Rc8+ Kg7 43.Rxh5 Rxd4 44.Rd8 Rd2 45.Rhxd5 Ra2 46.R8d7 Rxd7 47.Rxd7+ Kg6 48.Rd5 Kh6 49.Kg3 Kg6 50.Kf3 Ra3+ 51.Kg4 Ra4+ 52.Kg3 Ra3+ 53.Kh4 Ra4+ 54.g4 Ra6 55.Re5 Rb6 56.Kg3 Rb3+ 57.Kg2 Rb2+ 58.Kf3 Rh2 59.Re6+ Kf7 60.Rh6 Kg7 61.g5 Ra2 62.h4 Ra4 63.Kg3 Rb4 64.Rf6 Ra4 65.Rf4 Ra1 66.Kg4 Kg6 67.h5+ Kg7 68.Re4 Rg1+ 69.Kf5 Rf1+ 70.Rf4 Ra1 71.Re4 Rf1+ 72.Ke6 Rf8 73.Re5 Re8+ 74.Kf5 Rf8+ 75.Kg4 Kh8 76.g6 Ra8 77.Kg5 Ra1 78.Re8+ Kg7 79.h6# 1–0

S. Peters (1009) - J. Graveling (1413)
MLK Classic 2022, Round 1

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Bc4 g6 6.fxe5 Bxf3 7.Qxf3 dxe5 8.0–0 Bg7 9.d3 h6 10.Nd5 Nbd7 11.Nxf6+ Nxf6 12.Be3 a6 13.Rad1 Qe7 14.d4 0–0–0 15.d5 g5 16.a3 Rhf8 17.Qf2 Nd7 18.b4 Qd6 19.Be2 f6 20.Bg4 Kb8 21.c4 Rg8 22.c5 Qe7 23.d6 cxd6 24.Rxd6 f5 25.Bxf5 Nf6 26.Rfd1 Rxd6 27.cxd6 Qd8 28.Bb6 Qe8 29.d7 Nxd7 30.Rxd7 Bf6 31.Ba7+ Ka8 32.Qb6 Qc8 33.Rc7 Qxc7 34.Qxc7 Kxa7 35.Bc8 Rg7 36.Qc5+ b6 37.Qd5 Rc7 38.Qe6 Rxc8 39.Qxf6 1–0 ■

The Queen of Hearts: 50 Years of Memories

by Scott Varagona

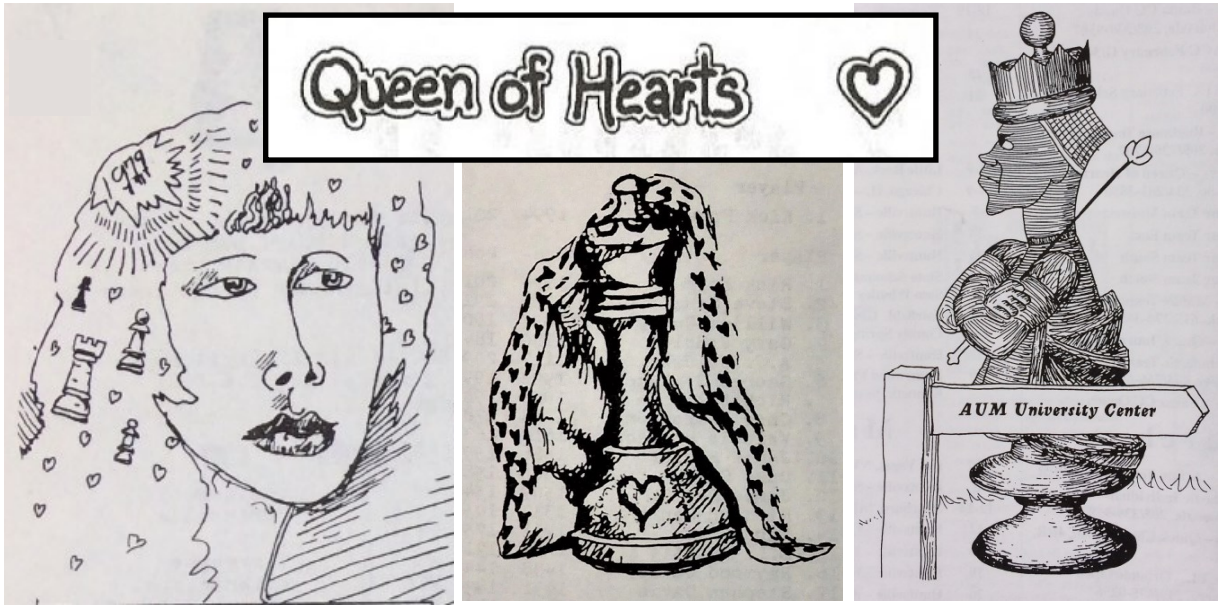
Montgomery's flagship tournament, the Queen of Hearts—aptly named, because it takes place near Valentine's Day every year—has a long and rich history as one of Alabama's most prestigious annual events. It is said to be the second-longest continuously running tournament in Alabama. (Only the Alabama State Championship, whose 68th edition was just held in 2021, has run longer.)

Many great players of Alabama as well as the whole Southeast have battled fiercely for the title of Queen of Hearts champion. In fact, I believe winning the Queen of Hearts is a rite of passage: up-and-coming players can feel they have truly joined the elite of Alabama chess if they triumph here.

Let's journey through the history of a beloved tournament—a history that stretches across six decades and features countless Alabama chess stars of the past, present, and future.

The 1970s

The first ever Queen of Hearts took place in 1973. Hosted by the Montgomery Chess Club, the event drew 45 participants; the TD was



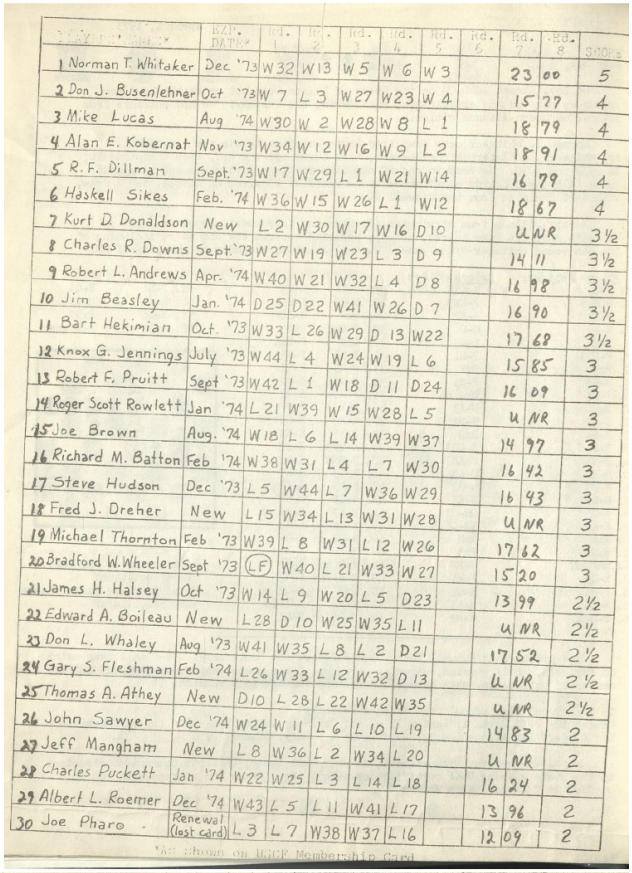
Queen of Hearts art in the Antics from the '70s, '80s, and '90s.

Robert Dillman of Birmingham. (See April 1973 *Antics*, p. 3-5.)

Norman T. Whitaker, an octogenarian International Master with a criminal record (but that's another story), won the first Queen of Hearts with a 5-0 score. Whitaker played in various events in the South in the early 1970s before he passed away in 1975 at the age of 85. (See May 1975 *Antics*, p. 4.)

The first edition of the Queen of Hearts only had one section, the Open, but there were class prizes. The April 1973 *Chess Life & Review* (p. 213) featured a brief report on the event; the full crosstable was published in the April 1973 *Antics*. We reprint the crosstable here.

An attendance of 45 players for a brand-new tournament may not sound so bad. However, financially, it was a disaster: Bill Bryan of the Montgomery Chess Club said that the first edition of the Queen of Hearts lost the club almost $200—which today would be equivalent to losing over $1000. Yikes!



	LAST DATE	Rd. 1	Rd. 2	Rd. 3	Rd. 4	Rd. 5	Rd. 6	Rd. 7	Rd. 8	score
1 Norman T. Whitaker	Dec '73	W32	W13	W5	W6	W3		23	00	5
2 Don J. Busenlehner	Oct '73	W7	L3	W27	W23	W4		15	77	4
3 Mike Lucas	Aug '74	W30	W2	W28	W8	L1		18	79	4
4 Alan E. Kobernat	Nov '73	W34	W12	W16	W9	L2		18	91	4
5 R.F. Dillman	Sept. '73	W17	W29	L1	W21	W14		16	79	4
6 Haskell Sikes	Feb. '74	W36	W15	W26	L1	W12		18	67	4
7 Kurt D. Donaldson	New	L2	W30	W17	W16	D10		U	NR	3½
8 Charles R. Downs	Sept. '73	W27	W19	W23	L3	D9		14	11	3½
9 Robert L. Andrews	Apr. '74	W40	W21	W32	L4	D8		16	98	3½
10 Jim Beasley	Jan. '74	D25	D22	W41	W26	D7		16	90	3½
11 Bart Hekimian	Oct. '73	W33	L26	W29	D13	W22		17	68	3½
12 Knox G. Jennings	July '73	W44	L4	W24	W19	L6		15	85	3
13 Robert F. Pruitt	Sept '73	W42	L1	W18	D11	D24		16	09	3
14 Roger Scott Rowlett	Jan '74	L21	W39	W15	W28	L5		U	NR	3
15 Joe Brown	Aug. '74	W18	L6	L14	W39	W37		14	97	3
16 Richard M. Batton	Feb '74	W38	W31	L4	L7	W30		16	42	3
17 Steve Hudson	Dec '73	L5	W44	L7	W36	W29		16	43	3
18 Fred J. Dreher	New	L15	W34	L13	W31	W28		U	NR	3
19 Michael Thornton	Feb '73	W39	L8	W31	L12	W26		17	62	3
20 Bradford W. Wheeler	Sept '73	(LF)	W40	L21	W33	W27		15	20	3
21 James H. Halsey	Oct '73	W14	L9	W20	L5	D23		13	99	2½
22 Edward A. Boileau	New	L28	D10	W25	W35	L11		U	NR	2½
23 Don L. Whaley	Aug '73	W41	W35	L8	L2	D21		17	52	2½
24 Gary S. Fleshman	Feb '74	L26	W33	L12	W32	D13		U	NR	2½
25 Thomas A. Athey	New	D10	L28	L22	W42	W35		U	NR	2½
26 John Sawyer	Dec '74	W24	W11	L6	L10	L19		14	83	2
27 Jeff Mangham	New	L8	W36	L2	W34	L20		U	NR	2
28 Charles Puckett	Jan '74	W22	W25	L3	L14	L18		16	24	2
29 Albert L. Roemer	Dec '74	W43	L5	L11	W41	L17		13	96	2
30 Joe Pharo	Renewal (lost card)	L3	L7	W38	W37	L16		12	09	2

Not shown on USCF Membership Card

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	score
31 Dennis Willis	Oct '73	W37	L16	L19	L16	W40		12	83	2
32 Francis J. Roemer	Sept '73	L1	W42	L9	L24	W41		12	24	2
33 Gary Robinson	Oct '73	L11	L24	(WF)	L20	W42		11	04	2
34 Glenn Calloway	Oct '73	L4	L18	W40	L27	W39		12	18	2
35 Robert N. Matuozzi	Feb '74	W45	L23	D37	L22	L25		14	00	1½
36 James D. Connell	Aug '73	L6	L27	W42	L17	D38		11	31	1½
37 Joe Wilson	New	L31	W38	D35	L30	L15		U	NR	1½
38 Loretta M. Bacon	Jan '74	L16	L37	L30	(WF)	D36		U	NR	1½
39 Mike Higgs	Oct '73	L19	L14	W45	L15	L34		10	46	1
40 Lynn S. Bryan	Oct '73	L9	L20	L34	(WF)	L31		8	00	1
41 William P. Bryan	Oct '73	L23	W45	L10	L29	L32		9	25	1
42 Pat R. Calloway	New	L13	L32	L36	L25	L33		U	NR	0
43 Will T. Sheehan	Oct '73	L29	Withdrew					U	NR	0
44 Arthur S.Y. Chen	New	L12	L17	(LF)	(LF)	Withdrew		U	NR	0
45 Jim Passmore	New	L35	L41	L39	(LF)	Withdrew		U	NR	0

Thankfully, for the second annual Queen of Hearts in 1974, the tournament's attendance would more than double—and, for the first time, there would be an Amateur Section. Marty Appleberry, a strong Alabama player of the late 1960s and 1970s, won the Open Section

with a perfect score. Norman T. Whitaker played in this edition as well, but he did not play at his best. Meanwhile, Alabama's strongest player, the legendary Milan Momic, lost a game by forfeit when he slept through a round. (Fortunately, Momic would bounce back and win clear first a year later, shortly before retiring from competitive chess.) At any rate, the crosstable for the 1974 edition includes the names of countless chess personalities from days gone by: Tom Nard, Chris Bond, Walter Schaetzle, Jack Mallory, Ben Sides, Lars Britt, Tim Bond… Remarkably, in the Amateur Section, we find various members of the Jurjevich family, including Joe Jurjevich, listed as unrated. And Kyle (Dana) Therrell's provisional rating was only 1044.

Milan Momic (left) and Marty Appleberry (right) at the 1975 Queen of Hearts. (March 1975 Antics)

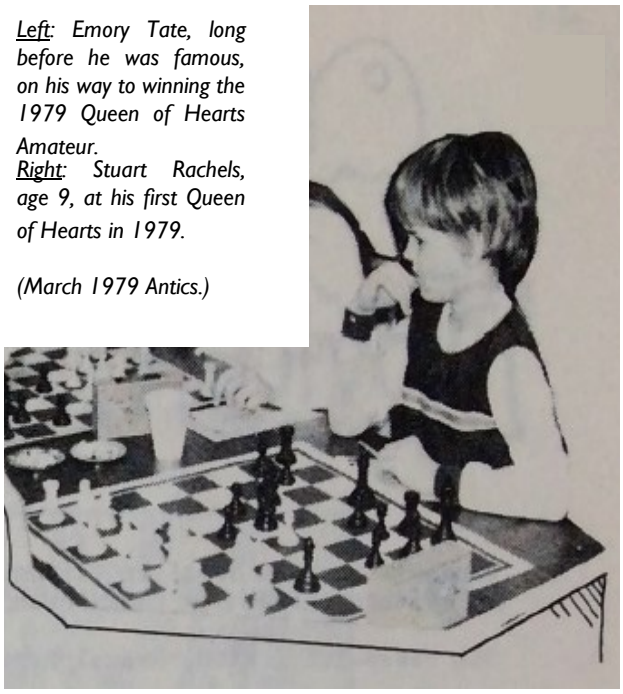
By the way, the legendary tournament director and *Antics* Editor, Bill Bryan, directed the second Queen of Hearts; he would go on to direct most editions of the tournament for the rest of the 1970s. His wife, Lynn Bryan, assisted in tournament organization as well.

The Queen of Hearts continued to flourish in the second half of the decade, drawing over 100 players most years and close to 100 in others. Some notable points:

- Marty Appleberry won the Open Section again in 1976, and thus, he became the first person to win more than one Queen of Hearts. (And, in the 1976 Amateur Section, "Kenny" Goodman of Montgomery first appeared in the crosstable as an unrated player).

- In 1978, in addition to the Open and Amateur Sections, a Novice Section was added for the first time.

- Having been held in various hotels earlier in the '70s, the Queen of Hearts tournament took place in the Montgomery Civic Center in 1979. A familiar



Left: Emory Tate, long before he was famous, on his way to winning the 1979 Queen of Hearts Amateur.
Right: Stuart Rachels, age 9, at his first Queen of Hearts in 1979.

(March 1979 Antics.)

name won the 1979 Amateur Section: Emory Tate of Montgomery, who was rated only 1730 at the time. (Thirty years later, as an IM, Tate would win the top section of the Queen of Hearts in 2009 and 2010.) Meanwhile, some kid named Stuart Rachels finished with a modest 2.5/5 score in the 1979 Novice Section…

The 1980s

The early '80s saw attendance at the Queen of Hearts begin to decline compared to the heyday of the 1970s "Fischer boom." As years passed, the tournament went from three sections down to just two, and then, in 1984, there were only 32 players in one section. The Montgomery Chess Club took steps to revitalize the tournament with advertising and a strong prize fund, and in 1986 there were 58 players across two sections: the Open and the Reserve.

Although the Queen of Hearts had fewer players overall in the 1980s, there was no lack of strong competition. Brent "Great American" Inman and Richard

Left: Two Alabama chess legends, Brent Inman and Stuart Rachels, battle at the 1981 Queen of Hearts. Stu won this game, but Brent won the tournament. (April 1981 Antics.) Right: Kyle Therrell, winner of various Queen of Hearts of the 1980s. (Fall 1992 Antics.)

Mark Powers (a Florida player) tied for first in 1981, with Brent winning the trophy on tiebreaks. After that, Kyle Therrell—fresh from his first state championship win in 1981—went on a three-year winning streak during 1982-1984. Interestingly, although Stuart Rachels was already a master during this period and had been having great success elsewhere, he seemed to be "cursed" by the Queen of Hearts. He finished half a point behind the winners in 1981; then, in 1983, despite being the 2200+ tournament favorite, he was crushed in round 4 by Tom Denton (see game 92 of *The Best I Saw in Chess*) and withdrew. Finally, Stuart managed to win in 1985, and with a perfect 5-0 score. Yet then Kyle Therrell struck back to win again in 1986, surpassing Stuart by half a point. And although Stuart was rated 2500+ at the 1987 edition, that year he lost a game to a 2100-rated Georgia player and managed "merely" a tie for first. Sometimes, even Alabama's all-time greats have a rocky relationship with the Queen of Hearts…

A few other points of note from the 1980s:

- It appears that the crosstables from the 1982 Queen of Hearts were never published in the

1982 QUEEN OF HEARTS/OPEN

MONTGOMERY AL 36116

DATE STARTED: 02/13/82 DATE ENDED: 02/14/82 DATE RATED: 03/15/82

AFFILIATE: A5006783
MONTGOMERY CHESS CLUB
C/O CHARLES R DOWNS, PRES

DIRECTOR: 12052760
CLAYTON BRANUM

ID		PLAYER	ST	PRE RTNG	POST RTNG	1	2	3	4	5	TOT
10236746	1	THERRELL,DANA A	AL	2263	2258	W19	L17	W-9	W-8	W-5	4.0
10239028	2	SIDES,BEN L	AL	2085	2106	W29	W24	W17	D-5	D-4	4.0
11523021	3	DANIEL,OTIS L	AL	1911	1963	L17	W29	W21	W10	W-7	4.0
10239184	4	PRUITT,ROBERT F	AL	1909	1982	W16	D10	W11	W-6	D-2	4.0
10239974	5	BOND,TIM	AL	2041	2057	W20	W12	W23	D-2	L-1	3.5
10767555	6	JURJEVICH,JOSEPH	AL	2122	2104	D25	W15	W14	L-4	D11	3.0
10240352	7	DENTON,TOM J	AL	2012	2011	D-9	W13	D10	W17	L-3	3.0
10337453	8	SMITH,DENNIS	AL	2000	1998	L10	W16	W24	L-1	W20	3.0
11197515	9	NEWTON,JOSEPH R	MA	1773	1816	D-7	W25	L-1	W23	D12	3.0
10240034	10	MC CRAY,WILLIAM A	AL	1764	1822	W-8	D-4	D-7	L-3	W22	3.0
12007810	11	BRENNAMAN,GARY E	AL	1757	1816	W22	D14	L-4	W18	D-6	3.0
11248268	12	SMEDLEY,ALLEN JEF	GA	1685	1754	W18	L-5	D20	W15	D-9	3.0
10240042	13	ROLAND,JERE E	AL	1956	1929	L21	L-7	W19	D24	W23	2.5
10237131	14	TODD,ALAN	AL	1872	1881	W26	D11	L-6	D20	D17	2.5
10239702	15	JOHNSON,DAVID A	AL	1769	1797	W28	L-6	D18	L12	W26	2.5
10247675	16	MC GUIRE,RAY	AL	1746	1767	L-4	L-8	D27	W26	W24	2.5
12168480	17	PRIEST,RONNIE	AL	1740	1805	W-3	W-1	L-2	L-7	D14	2.5
10237831	18	GWIN,JACK P	AL	1947	1911	L12	W26	D15	L11	D19	2.0
11251510	19	DAUGHERTY,JOHN	AL	1909	1897	L-1	D22	L13	W27	D18	2.0
10240671	20	IVY,BILLY	AL	1821	1831	L-5	W27	D12	D14	L-8	2.0
10239877	21	BURKETT,W TOM	AL	1784	1771	W13	L23	L-3	L22	W27	2.0
10306957	22	DEAL,KENNETH LEE	AL	1670	1698	L11	D19	D25	W21	L10	2.0
12256310	23	GURLASKIE,JONATHA	FL	1605	1614	B--	W21	L-5	L-9	L13	2.0
12371180	24	GOMBARCIK,GEORGE	AL	1744/5	1755	W27	L-2	L-8	D13	L16	1.5
10768900	25	LAWSON,MICHAEL D	AL	1827	1813	D-6	L-9	D22	U--	U--	1.0
12294580	26	DAVIS,LAVARSO	AL	1734/5	1601	L14	L18	B--	L16	L15	1.0
12295290	27	KISSELL,JOSEPH J	AL	1846	1773	L24	L20	D16	L19	L21	.5
10239303	28	DREHER,III FRED J	AL	1961	1937	L15	U--	U--	U--	U--	.0
10240409	29	BRITT,LARS E	AL	1832	1814	L-2	L-3	U--	U--	U--	.0

TIED PLAYERS ARE LISTED IN ORDER OF PRE-TOURNAMENT RATINGS
W-WIN, L-LOSS, D-DRAW, X-FORFEIT WIN, F-FORFEIT LOSS
Z-FORFEIT DRAW, H-1/2 PT BYE, B-BYE, U-UNPLAYED

The lost Queen of Hearts crosstables of 1982.

Left: Open Section.

Below: Amateur Section.

(Courtesy of Clay Branum and Charles Anthony.)

Antics. Clay Branum, who directed the 1982 and 1983 editions of the tournament, was kind enough to provide the original crosstable of the 1982 Queen of Hearts Open Section for us to print here. Charles Anthony, the winner of the 1982 Amateur Section, provided the crosstable for his section. Thank you very much, gentlemen! Now these crosstables can be saved in the *Antics* for posterity. (However, the crosstable from 1989 is still missing...)

1982 QUEEN OF HEARTS/AMATEUR

MONTGOMERY AL 36116 03/15/82

DATE STARTED: 02/13/82 DATE ENDED: 02/14/82 DATE RATE

AFFILIATE: A5006783
MONTGOMERY CHESS CLUB
C/O CHARLES R DOWNS, PRES

DIRECTOR: 12052760
CLAYTON BRANUM

ID		PLAYER	ST	PRE RTNG	POST RTNG	1	2	3	4	5	TOT
12335310	1	ANTHONY,CHARLES H	AL	1637	1739	W34	W14	W11	W-9	W-8	5.0
10158052	2	BELLEZZA,RICHARD	GA	1791	1803	W26	W16	D-7	D-4	W13	4.0
12312750	3	SWINNEY,JAMES H	AL	1608	1693	W24	D-6	D-5	W22	W-9	4.0
10239150	4	COOPER,TERRY	AL	1604	1655	W28	W23	D22	D-2	W16	4.0
12095170	5	DE SANTOS,ANTHONY	NJ	1439/12	1582	D-8	W20	D-3	W11	W10	4.0
12394473	6	CAPP,RICHARD H	AL	1688/9	1752	W19	D-3	L-8	W18	W15	3.5
10239729	7	KEMP,EDDIE C	AL	1651	1666	W40	W29	D-2	L-8	W22	3.5
12269990	8	FREEMAN,DARRYL O.	AL	1620	1692	D-5	W17	W-6	W-7	L-1	3.5
12052730	9	WHITE,PAUL D	AL	1657	1676	W27	W33	W15	L-1	L-3	3.0
10237751	10	COCKRELL,ERNEST M	AL	1599	1611	W39	L15	W23	W14	L-5	3.0
12274770	11	WALDREP,JAMES H	AL	1591	1593	W36	W30	L-1	L-5	W29	3.0
12270000	12	JAKEMAN,KEITH R.	AL	1586/14	1566	L29	W36	W26	L16	W24	3.0
12305010	13	COCKRELL,JAMES M	AL	1566	1559	W35	L22	W30	W29	L-2	3.0
12040340	14	BURDETTE,JOHN G	FL	1540	1545	W32	L-1	W38	L10	W31	3.0
12345080	15	HAYES,JERRY	AL	1534	1557	W38	W10	L-9	W25	L-6	3.0
12050260	16	HOLLOWAY,RALPH G.	AL	1499	1527	W31	L-2	W32	W12	L-4	3.0
12400407	17	PIERCESON,FRANKLI	AL	0	1640	D20	L-8	W21	D19	W27	3.0
12399059	18	MAGBULOS,BOB	AL	0	1663	L23	W28	W33	L-6	W26	3.0
12269980	19	TAMPLIN,JOHN A.	AL	1589	1580	L-6	W24	L29	D17	W35	2.5
10239036	20	LLOYD,ROBERT W	AL	1492	1492	D17	L-5	D34	W32	D21	2.5
12396938	21	WALLACE,JAMES S	AL	1450/15	1419	L22	B--	L17	X--	D20	2.5
10501679	22	GALLL,JOEL B	AL	1013/13	1195	W21	W13	D-4	L-3	L-7	2.5
12229040	23	ALFORD,PATRICK R	AL	1698	1654	W18	L-4	L10	L31	W37	2.0
12399557	24	GUSTAFSON,KENNETH	AL	1595	1570	L-3	L19	X--	W33	L12	2.0
10239869	25	BRICE,PAUL T	AL	1535	1513	L30	W35	W27	L15	U--	2.0
11478221	26	RACHELS,DAVID A	AL	1482	1471	L-2	W31	L12	W37	L18	2.0
11351069	27	FAULKNER,ROYCE	AL	1469	1442	L-9	W37	L25	X--	L17	2.0
12345120	28	SKELTON,TOMMY	AL	1429	1421	L-4	L16	D35	X--	D33	2.0
12335320	29	TAYLOR,PHILLIP O	AL	1392	1417	W12	L-7	W19	L13	L11	2.0
10239125	30	WILLIAMS,WILLIAM	AL	1207	1228	W25	L11	L13	F--	X--	2.0
12400404	31	HESS,KARL L	AL	0	1364	L16	L26	W36	W23	L14	2.0
12400401	32	HORNE,STEVE	AL	0	1301	L14	W34	L16	L20	W36	2.0
10237041	33	ROLAND,DAVID L	AL	1544	1506	W37	L-9	L18	L24	D28	1.5
11523030	34	ECHOLS,TODD	AL	1475/9	1401	L-1	L32	D20	L35	X--	1.5
12400402	35	GARDNER,ROBERT M	AL	0	1339	L13	L25	D28	W34	L19	1.5
12400405	36	SMITH,CEDRIC	AL	0	1061	L11	L12	L31	B--	L32	1.0
12400406	37	JONES,ROBERT	AL	0	1148	L33	L27	X--	L26	L23	1.0
12400403	38	OLSEN,ROBERT	AL	0	1270	L15	W40	L14	F--	F--	1.0
11444407	39	PRIBULICK,JOE M	AL	1261	1257	L10	U--	U--	U--	U--	.0
12222660	40	CLAYTON,ALBERT	AL	1151/9	1136	L-7	L38	F--	U--	U--	.0

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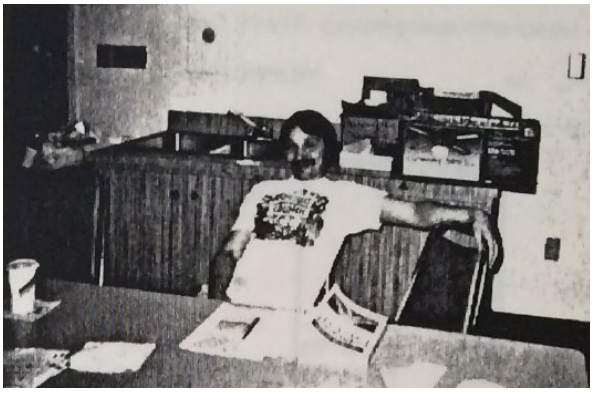
TOURNAMENT NO. 820214/05

- Tournament flyers show that Richard Bellezza served as the TD for the Queen of Hearts starting in 1987. It appears Tom Nard of the Montgomery Chess Club was also involved in the tournament's organization for many years in the '80s.

- As reported in the June/July 1984 *Antics*, "This year's [1984] Q. of H. was held on the modernistic campus of Auburn University at Montgomery thanks to the efforts of Keith Jakeman [President of the AUM Chess Club]." Little did anyone know at the time that the tournament would take place at AUM again for most, if not all, of the rest of the 1980s, all the way up to 2020.



Rich Bellezza in 1991. (See vol. 1 1992 Antics.)

The 1990s

Crosstables for the 1990 and 1991 Queen of Hearts tournaments have not been located yet, but we know from a flyer in the November 1989 *Antics* that the 1990 Queen of Hearts was to take place at the AUM University Center. In fact, every Queen of Hearts from the 1990s that we currently have record of in the *Antics* took place at AUM. Rich Bellezza of Georgia served as TD almost every year through the 1990s to the year 2000. (Sadly, he passed away in 2002.)

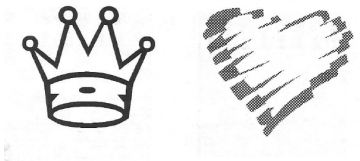
From 1992 to 1996, there was quite a "revolving door" of winners for the Open Section. Only A.J. Goldsby (FL) was able to win or share first place for two years in a row (1994-1995). Bill Melvin got his first Queen of Hearts victory in 1994, tying for first; despite coming close several times, this would be Bill's only win at this tournament until 2006. The Queen of Hearts curse strikes again: even in their prime, Alabama's legendary players often have difficulty winning this event. The "Queen" has a fickle heart!

Still, the most notable performance of this decade had to

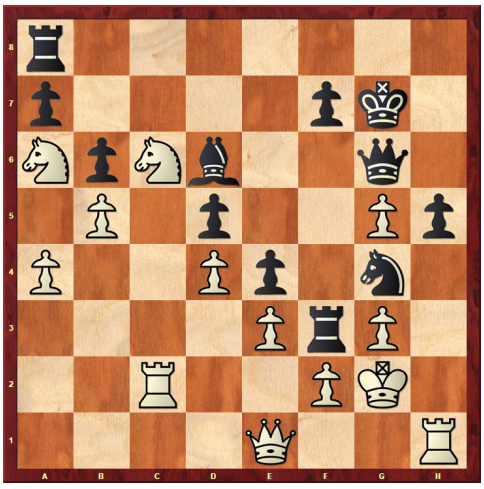
be that of Stephen Muhammad (formerly Steven Booth), an FM (later, IM) from Georgia. In 1997, he began his historic winning streak: clear first place in the Open Section for five consecutive years. His dominance was evident in games like this:

A. Whatley - S. Muhammad
(2255) (2315)
26th Queen of Hearts, Round 5
Montgomery, AL; 2-15-1998

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bg5 Bg7 4.Nbd2 d5 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Be2 0–0 7.b4 c6 8.0–0 Re8 9.c3 e5 10.Nb3 h6 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.a4 e4 13.Nfd2 Be7 14.Qb1 Bd6 15.Nc5 Nf8 16.c4 b6 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Na6 Qh4 19.g3 Qe7 20.b5 Nh7 21.Qb3 Be6 22.Rab1 Rac8 23.Rfc1 Ng5 24.h4 Nh7 25.Kg2 Nf6 26.Rh1 Kg7 27.Qd1 Rc3 28.Rb3 Rcc8 29.Nb1 h5 30.Nc3 Ng8 31.Na2 Nh6 32.N2b4 Nf5 33.Nc6 Qd7 34.Rc3 Nh6 35.Qd2 Ra8 36.Qa2 Bg4 37.Qd2 Qf5 38.Bxg4 Nxg4 39.Qe2 Re6 40.Rhc1 g5 41.Rh1 Rf6 42.Rc2 Qg6 43.Qe1 Rf3 44.hxg5



(Art from Nov. '98 - Jan. '99 Antics.)



44…Bxg3! 45.Rg1 Bxf2 46.Rxf2 Rxf2+ 47.Qxf2 Nxf2 48.Ne5 Qf5 49.Rf1 Qh3+ 50.Kxf2 Rc8 51.Nc6 Qf3+ 52.Kg1 Qxe3+ 53.Rf2 Qc1+ 54.Kg2 Qxg5+ 55.Kf1 Qc1+ 56.Kg2 Kh8 57.Ne5 Rg8+ 58.Kh3 Qh1+ 59.Rh2 Qf1+ 0–1

The 2000s

In the new millennium, the "Q.o.H." continued to take place at AUM; this was thanks largely to Rhodes Peele, a mathematics professor at AUM and a longtime Alabama chess competitor. (Rhodes had also been *Antics* Editor for most of the latter half of the 1990s up until the year 2000.)

This decade was characterized by four(!) different winning streaks: Stephen Muhummad's streak from

the '90s continued until 2001, FM Todd Andrews of Tennessee took clear first in 2002-2004, I won or tied for first each year in 2006-2008, and finally, IM Emory Tate won in 2009 and 2010.

Yet perhaps the most important point of all was that, in 2001, the "Caesar Lawrence era" began. As it turned out, Caesar would be a TD at the Queen of Hearts every year from 2001 to 2022. What a huge undertaking, and what an incredible contribution to the legacy of this tournament! It should be noted that Doug Strout would assist with TD duties in various years; Mike Lawson and James Garner would sometimes help as well. With the addition of a Queen of Hearts Scholastic tournament alongside the regular tournament, the TDs certainly had their hands full...

The 2010s & 2020s

We now come to a decade with some happy memories for me. My chess career had been going great during 2005-2008; however, from 2009-2011, it seemed I was floundering around, stuck on a plateau. At last, I got a lucky break:

TD Caesar Lawrence (left) awards Rhodes Peele (right) a class prize at the 2015 Queen of Hearts. (Photo by Antics Editor.)

despite some very dubious play in several games (see Spring 2012 *Antics*), I managed to win clear first at the 2012 Queen of Hearts. This was my first major tournament victory in years, and it helped propel my rating up towards Master level—which I finally reached later that year. For some years after that, it felt like I could do no wrong at this tournament: I won clear first in 2013, 2015, and 2016, and I tied for first in a very strong field in 2014. I was particularly proud of my 2015 win, as two of my games—versus Chao Zhang and Brent Inman—

were among my best games ever. (See Summer 2015 and Summer 2020 *Antics*.) As my brother would tell me, "You are the Queen of Hearts."

Good thing I enjoyed it while it lasted! In more recent years, new blood has reigned supreme in Montgomery. Matthew Puckett, who became state co-champion back in 1999, revitalized his chess career with a 2018 Queen of Hearts victory. Then Yury Barnakov proved he was

Above: Your Editor at his first Queen of Hearts in 2004. (Spring 2004 Antics.)

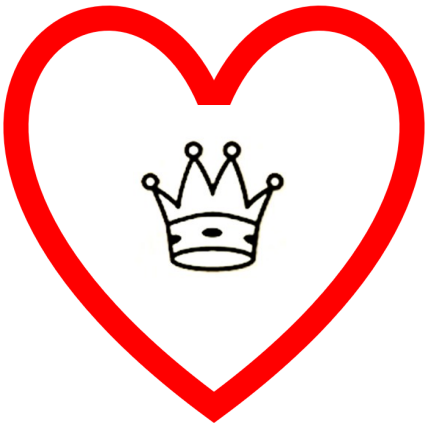
Below: A typical shot of the action in the AUM Taylor Center, where the tournament took place for many years. (Photo by Antics Editor in 2016.)

a force to be reckoned with, tying for first in 2019 and winning outright in 2020. But also, the young lions have really started to show up: Faruk Esat Ergin and Michael Porcelli also tied for first (with Yury) in 2019; Alexander Rutten (GA), Aaron DeCord, and Miles Melvin shared first place in 2021; and finally, Isaac Snow and Henry Hopson (GA) tied for first in 2022. With all these young talents leaving their mark, the future of the Queen of Hearts—and Alabama chess—looks bright.

We should also mention that TD Caesar Lawrence deserves special commendation for organizing the Queen of Hearts even during the pandemic years. As Caesar's biography in the Alabama Chess Hall of Fame states, "Few organizers in the country were willing to organize a multi-day event requiring masks and social distancing, but Caesar managed to keep the long streak of Queen of Hearts tournaments alive."

A player who wins the Queen of Hearts can truly say: "Okay, I have arrived. I'm in the elite of Alabama chess, and I'm here to stay." It really is something special. So, I conclude this article with a list of all known Open or Premier Section winners since the tournament's inception. If anyone knows any information about the three missing years, please let me know. We would love to have the complete history of this tournament preserved.

In the meantime, let's toast to 50 great years of chess at the Queen of Hearts. Cheers!



Queen of Hearts Winners

(not necessarily in tiebreak order)

1973	Norman T. Whitaker
1974	Marty Appleberry
1975	Milan Momic
1976	Marty Appleberry
1977	Alan Todd, Robert Jurjevich, Friedrich Bittner, Ben Sides
1978	Friedrich Bittner
1979	J. Scott Pfeiffer
1980	A.J. Goldsby
1981	Brent Inman, Richard Mark Powers
1982	Kyle Therrell, Ben Sides, Lamar Daniel, Robert Pruitt
1983	Kyle Therrell
1984	Kyle Therrell
1985	Stuart Rachels
1986	Kyle Therrell
1987	Stuart Rachels, George S. Leite
1988	Moshe Khatena
1989	????????????????
1990	????????????????
1991	????????????????
1992	Clark Harmon
1993	John Morash, Keith Jakeman
1994	Bill Melvin, A.J. Goldsby
1995	A.J. Goldsby
1996	Ross Sprague
1997	Stephen Muhammad
1998	Stephen Muhammad
1999	Stephen Muhammad
2000	Stephen Muhammad
2001	Stephen Muhammad
2002	Todd Andrews
2003	Todd Andrews
2004	Todd Andrews
2005	Rick Price
2006	Bill Melvin, Scott Varagona
2007	Stephen Muhammad, Scott Varagona
2008	Scott Varagona
2009	Emory Tate
2010	Emory Tate
2011	Wayne Christensen
2012	Scott Varagona
2013	Scott Varagona
2014	David Ross, Chao Zhang, Scott Varagona, Joseph Jurjevich
2015	Scott Varagona
2016	Scott Varagona
2017	Eli Karp
2018	Matthew Puckett
2019	Faruk Ergin, Yury Barnakov, Michael Porcelli
2020	Yury Barnakov
2021	Alexander Rutten, Aaron DeCord, Miles Melvin
2022	Isaac Snow, Henry Hopson

References

Q.o.H. Reports from *Alabama Chess Antics* of: April 1973, April 1974, March 1975, April 1976, June 1977, November 1978, March 1979, April 1980, July 1980, April 1981, June 1982, April 1983, June July 1984, May 1985, April 1986, August 1986, March 1987, May 1988 (includes articles on both the 1987 and 1988 Q.o.H. tournaments), May-July 1997, May-July 1998, May-July 1999, May-July 2000, April 2002, Winter 2002, Summer 2003, Spring 2004, Spring 2005, Spring 2006, Spring 2007, Spring, Summer 2008, Winter Spring 2010, Spring 2011, Spring 2012, Spring 2013, Summer 2014, Summer 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2019, Winter 2020, Winter 2021.

Q.o.H. tournament flyers (pre-digital age) in *Alabama Chess Antics* of: January 1975, December 1975, January 1977, December 1977, January 1979, February 1980, January 1982, January 1984, January 1985, November 1985, December 1986, December 1988, November 1989, February 1995, February 1997, February-April 1998, February-April 1999, November 1999-January 2000, Winter 2002.

Q.o.H. tournament crosstables & tournament director info from 1992 onwards: uschess.org. ■

50th Queen of Hearts

by Scott Varagona & Caesar Lawrence

The 50th annual Queen of Hearts tournament took place on February 5-6, 2022, at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites (Eastchase) in Montgomery. There were 49 participants across three sections: the Premier (1600+), Reserve (U1600), and Amateur (U1200). Caesar Lawrence of *Caesar Chess* was the TD; after all these years, he continues to be the main driving force behind the Queen of Hearts.

Commemorative art from the tournament flyer.

Once the dust had settled after five rounds of fighting chess, **Isaac Snow** and **Henry Hopson** shared first place with 4 points in the Premier Section. Isaac received the champion's trophy on tiebreaks. This tournament win is the latest, and perhaps greatest, of Isaac's triumphs in OTB tournament play in Alabama over the last several years; he continues inching closer to master level. (Isaac writes about his chess experiences, including the 2022 Queen of Hearts, on his "Lightning" blog found on chess.com.)

Atindrah Harishankar won the Reserve Section convincingly with 4.5 points, a full point ahead of the nearest rivals.

Finally, in the Amateur Section, **Abhiraj Sarkar** achieved a perfect 5-0 score and gained over 300 rating points. Congratulations to all these winners.

The following pages feature crosstables and photos submitted by Caesar Lawrence, as well as a few games submitted by various players.

-Editor

Left: Premier winners Isaac Snow (left) and Henry Hopson (right). Center: Reserve champion Atindrah Harishankar. Right: TD Caesar Lawrence presents the Amateur Section trophy to Abhiraj Sarkar. Photos submitted by Caesar Lawrence.

2022_QUEEN_OF_HEARTS: 2022_QoH_PREMIERE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bl	Prize
1	1-2	Zachary I Snow II	15336543	2104	2124	AL	W11	W5	W4	D3	D2	4.0	14.5	17	13.5	52	3	375.00
2		Henry Foster Hopson	15547376	2027	2077	GA	W19	D3	W17	W14	D1	4.0	12.5	14	12.5	46	2	375.00
3	3-6	Chibuzo Ilonze	15039294	2123	2128	AL	W9	D2	W12	D1	D4	3.5	14.5	17.5	11.5	53.5	3	
4		Sherwood Dong	14582202	2004	2040	AL	W15	W14	L1	W13	D3	3.5	12	13.5	11.5	45	2	
5		James Er Hargrove	12694454	1929	1937	LA	W16	L1	D19	W10	W11	3.5	10.5	12	9.5	38.5	2	
6		Mariano Runco	16202653	1615	1764	AL	D7	L10	W18	W19	W13	3.5	9	10.5	8.5	31.5	2	200.00/U1900
7	7-9	Kenneth W Goodman	12435248	1878	1880	AL	D6	W8	D13	L12	W15	3.0	11.5	13	9	36.5	3	
8		Anmay K Chaudhury	16936713	1626	1733	GA	D17	L7	W21	D9	W19	3.0	10	11.5	7.5	33.5	2	
9		Michael Porcelli	13314357	1877	1870	AL	L3	W15	D20	D8	W16	3.0	9.5	11	7.5	35	3	
10	10-12	Steven Pan	15963582	1721	1748	AL	H---	W6	L14	L5	W20	2.5	7.5	11	7	32.5	2	
11		Taher Rahgooy	16906871	1821	1820	FL	L1	D22	W23	W20	L5	2.5	6.5	11.5	7	37	3	
12		Brian Richardson	12443356	1955	1954	TX	D23	W21	L3	W7	U---	2.5	5.5	9	8.5	28	2	
13	13-18	Charles Meidinger	10237114	2009	1969	AL	D21	W20	D7	L4	L6	2.0	9.5	13	8	39.5	3	
14		Aaron Decord	15675377	2121	2100	AL	W22	L4	W10	L2	U---	2.0	7.5	11.5	8	35	1	
15		Ethan Josia Smith	16068600	1673	1675	AL	L4	L9	B---	W22	L7	2.0	7.5	11	4	32	2	
16		David Char Mooney	20069105	1640	1645	MS	L5	B---	D22	D17	L9	2.0	7	10.5	5.5	28.5	2	
17		Xavier Bruni	15840554	1899	1881	AL	D8	W23	L2	D16	U---	2.0	5.5	9.5	7.5	29	2	
18		Randy W Cope	11329462	1891	1837	AL	L20	L19	L6	B---	W23	2.0	4	7.5	2	24	2	
19	19-22	Samuel Baskarraj	16665811	1817	1796	AL	L2	W18	D5	L6	L8	1.5	11.5	15.5	5.5	40	3	
20		Kristian K Jordan	15193161	1619	1632	AL	W18	L13	D9	L11	L10	1.5	8.5	11.5	6.5	31.5	2	
21		Arturo Saliva	12455439	1738	1722	FL	D13	L12	L8	D23	D22	1.5	7.5	10.5	4	31.5	2	
22		Landon Byr Anglin	12906432	1829	1792	FL	L14	D11	D16	L15	D21	1.5	7	9.5	4	28.5	3	
23	23	Saikarunya Kesireddy	16974321	1649	1640	AL	D12	L17	L11	D21	L18	1.0	8	11	3.5	29	3	

2022_QUEEN_OF_HEARTS: 2022_QoH_RESERVE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bl	Prize
1	1	Atindrah Harishankar	15081971	1279	1531	AL	W13	W4	W2	D3	W6	4.5	13	15	14	42.5	2	300.00/1st
2	2-5	Michael Connally	16461153	1342	1412	AL	W5	W6	L1	W7	D3	3.5	13.5	15	11.5	49	2	87.50/U1400
3		Gabe Clements	30438873	unr.	1542	AL	H---	W9	W7	D1	D2	3.5	11.5	11.5	10.5	38	2	87.50
4		John Lewis*	12416560	1583	1562	AL	W8	L1	W11	D5	W7	3.5	11	12.5	10	41	3	87.50
5		Blake Owen Fowler	30022231	1112p	1276	FL	L2	B---	W9	D4	W8	3.5	11	11	8	32	2	87.50
6	6	Douglas Strout	13592632	1500	1474	AL	W10	L2	W8	H---	L1	2.5	7	11.5	8.5	35	1	
7	7-10	Whitney Wadsworth	17241595	895	968	AL	B---	W11	L3	L2	L4	2.0	8.5	12	8	37	2	
8		Kendall Logan Franks	16390407	1336	1321	AL	L4	W12	L6	W11	L5	2.0	8.5	12	6	34.5	3	
9		Sean Franklin Brown	17335694	1381	1344	PA	H---	L3	L5	W12	D10	2.0	6	9.5	4.5	25	2	
10		Jim O'Neal Griffin	12711496	1306	1277	AL	L6	D13	L12	B---	D9	2.0	5.5	8	3.5	18	3	
11	11-12	Wendell Whitaker	13729200	1343	1287	AL	W12	L7	L4	L8	U---	1.0	5	8.5	5	27	2	
12		Daniel Williams	13709281	1274	1239	AL	L11	L8	W10	L9	U---	1.0	5	7	3	19	2	
13	13	Thomas Gilbreath	12621562	1455	1426	AL	L1	D10	U---	U---	U---	0.5	1.5	6	2	17.5	1	

**Note: Caesar Lawrence informed us that John Lewis played in the second Queen of Hearts (Amateur), in 1974. See April 1974 Antics.*

2022_QUEEN_OF_HEARTS: 2022_QoH_AMATEUR -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bl	Prize
1	1	Abhiraj Sarkar	16489263	712p	1080	AL	W7	W12	W8	W2	W5	5.0	10.5	11.5	15	40	2	225.00/1st
2	2-3	Indigo Masaai Daniels	30096534	1047p	1142	AL	W10	W3	W5	L1	W8	4.0	14	15.5	13	48	3	137.50
3		Jett Schencker	30445551	unr.	1096		W9	L2	W6	W7	W12	4.0	10	11	11	35	3	137.50/U1000
4	4	Garry Williams	12455356	947	979	AL	W11	W8	H---	L5	B---	3.5	6.5	6.5	10	20	2	
5	5-6	Luke Chatel	30186092	1030p	1025	AL	W13	W6	L2	W4	L1	3.0	14.5	15.5	11	48	3	
6		Harisankar Sivakumar	15081950	903	888	AL	B---	L5	L3	W13	W7	3.0	10	10	7	32	2	
7	7-11	Shambeau Das	30441650	unr.	781		L1	W13	W9	L3	L6	2.0	9	14	7	41	2	
8		Preston Helms	15036157	1175	1081	AL	W12	L4	L1	B---	L2	2.0	8	13	6	41	2	
9		Matt Broyles	30290592	959p	863	AL	L3	B---	L7	W10	L11	2.0	6	10	5	26	2	
10		Destry Gilmore	30270219	622p	620	AL	L2	W11	L12	L9	W13	2.0	5.5	9.5	5	27	3	
11		Noah D Berry	30419921	unr.	616	TN	L4	L10	L13	W12	W9	2.0	5.5	8.5	3	26	2	
12	12-13	Robert David Ward	30295456	646p	630	AL	L8	L1	W10	L11	L3	1.0	9.5	14.5	3	40	2	
13		Robert Slagle III	30217814	375p	413	AL	L5	L7	W11	L6	L10	1.0	8.5	11.5	3	33	2	

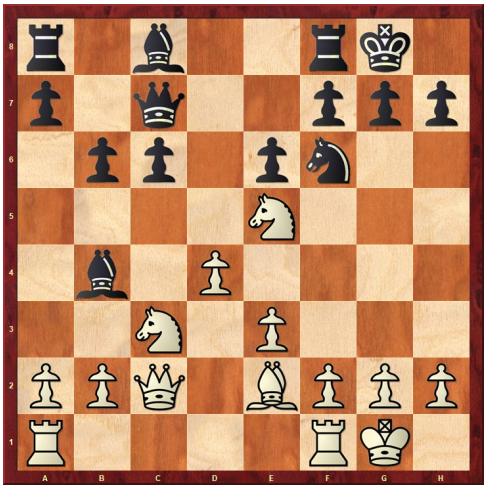
Game of the Quarter:

Q.o.H.: Fighting for First

Game annotated by Henry Hopson

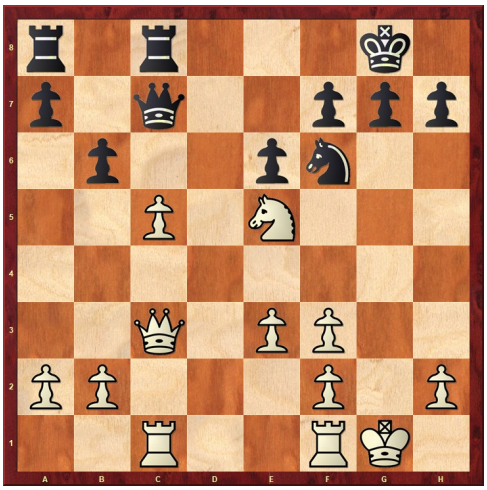
Aaron DeCord - Henry Hopson
(2124) (2027)
50th Queen of Hearts, Round 4
Montgomery, AL; 2-6-2022

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 Nbd7 6.e3 Qa5 7.Nd2 Bb4 8.Qc2 dxc4 9.Bxf6 Nxf6 10.Nxc4 Qc7 11.Be2 0–0 12.0–0 b6 Intending to trade off the bishop with Ba6 and Bxc4 before playing c5. **13.Ne5!?**

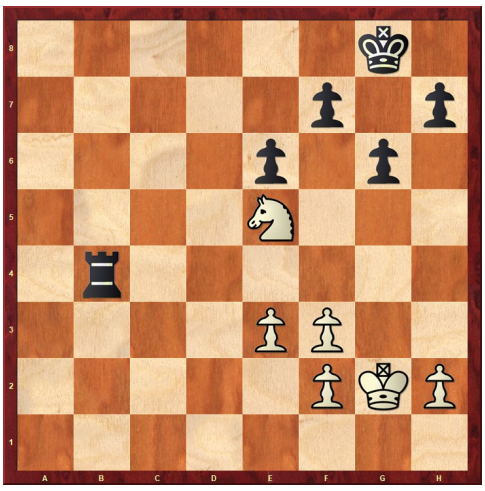


An interesting move that prevents black from trading off the light-squared bishop. It also threatens Nb5, winning a pawn. **13...Bxc3?!** I decided to try to force through c5, in order to challenge the knight on e5. This was a bad decision because the c6 pawn is quite weak in the meantime and will still be weak after an eventual c5 dxc5 bxc5. 13...Bd6 was the other move I considered, but after 14.f4 I thought it was unlikely that I could dislodge the knight on e5 and I was scared of white playing directly against my king with 14...Bb7 15.g4. However, I should have gone for this instead of accepting such a passive weakness. Black should objectively be able to defend as he hasn't done anything crazy and has a normal castled position. If 13...c5?? then 14.Nb5 Qb8 15.a3. **14.Qxc3 Bb7 15.Rac1 Rfc8 16.Bf3** [16.b4! would have been strong prophylaxis and a clear advantage for White, who can play against my weak pawn for a long time.] **16...c5** Although the pawn will still be a liability on c5, I was very happy to be able to play this freeing move. **17.dxc5 Bxf3 18.gxf3??** White wanted to keep the knight on its dominating square, but it is too loose now. 18.Nxf3 Qxc5 19.Qxc5 Rxc5 20.Rxc5 bxc5 21.Rc1 Nd7: I planned to head for this

endgame and try to defend it, but the pawn on c5 isn't that fun.

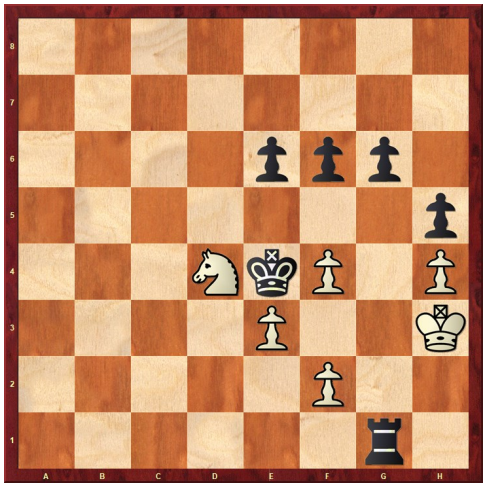


18...Nd5! 19.cxb6 The knight can't be defended: 19.Qd4 bxc5 20.Qe4 f5 followed by Qxe5. **19...Nxc3 20.bxc7 Ne2+ 21.Kg2 Nxc1 22.Rxc1** White temporarily has two pawns for the exchange. It's critical that black frees his rooks and challenges the pawn immediately. **22...a6** [22...a5! would have been more accurate in light of white's response.] **23.Rc6!** Interrupting black's plan, at least temporarily. **23...g6** [23...Ra7 24.Rd6 Raxc7 25.Rxa6 Allowing white hope by letting him keep the two passed pawns is not a good idea.] **24.Nd7?** [24.Nc4! The knight should have headed for d6, not b6. Why? The white rook would like to go to b6. 24...Ra7 25.Nd6 Rcxc7 26.Rb6 I think that white can reasonably hope to defend this endgame. Black is still better, but preserving a pair of rooks and an extra pawn for white is a big deal.] **24...Ra7 25.Nc5** [25.Nb6 Rcxc7 26.Rd6 Compare this position to the one after 24. Nc4! The rook and knight have switched places, meaning that 26...Rc2 now either wins a pawn or forces the awkward Na4.] **25...Raxc7 26.Rxc7 Rxc7 27.Nxa6 Rc2 28.b4 Rxa2 29.Nc5 Rb2 30.Nd3** [30.Na6 would hold onto the pawn, but if white commits his knight to remain on one square on the side of the board, he's effectively playing down a rook.] **30...Rb3 31.Ne5 Rxb4**



I think that my opponent misevaluated this position and thought that he had drawing chances

even without the two queenside pawns, or else he would have tried harder to keep the other pair of rooks on the board. Some players told me after the game that they also thought this position would be difficult to win. I never thought so! Even if knights are good in positions with the pawns on the same side, white's structure is seriously compromised and a rook is a rook. Between attacking weak pawns with my rook, trying to infiltrate with my king, and threatening liquidations into pawn endgames, black should win this every time, even if it takes a while. **32.f4?!** I would resist playing this move if possible, although it might not be possible forever. It opens up the path that my king used to infiltrate in the game. **32...f6 33.Nd3 Rc4 34.Kf3 Kg7** I wanted to provoke white into playing h2-h4 before I went around with my king. The pawn is even more vulnerable on that square. **35.Kg3 h5 36.h4?!** Again, white should resist this move, but he was probably worried about me playing Kh6 and g5. **36...Kf7** Now that the kingside is locked up, I can focus on trying to get to e4 with my king. **37.Kh3 Ke7 38.Ne1 Rc1 39.Nf3 Kd6 40.Kg3 Kd5 41.Nd4 Rg1+ 42.Kh3 Ke4** Everything wins, but this is the cleanest. White can't hold onto his pawns and fend off checkmate.



43.Kh2 Rd1 [43...Rg4 44.Kh3 Rxf4! would have earned me more style points.] **44.Nxe6 Kf3 45.Nf8 Rf1 46.Nxg6 Rxf2+ 47.Kh3 Rg2 48.Ne7 Rg3+ 49.Kh2 Rg4 50.Kh3 Ke4** Playing for zugzwang to safely take the pawns. 50...Kxe3 allows 51.Nd5+ Kf3 52.Nxf6 , although even this is winning for black. **51.f5 Ke5 52.Kh2 Rg7 53.Ng6+ Kxf5 54.Nf4 Rg4 55.Ng2 Ke4 White resigned (0–1)**. This was an important win for me, since it meant I would only need a draw in the final round to share first. ■

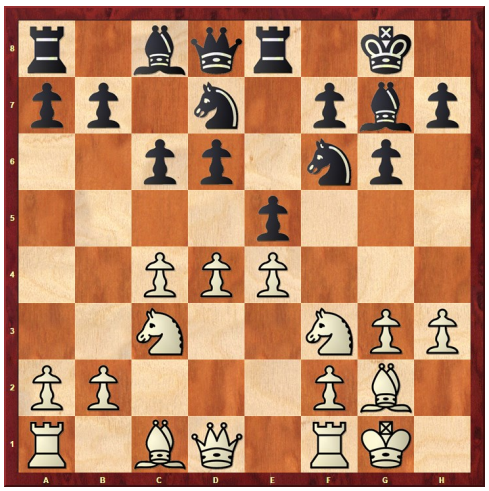
Many thanks to Henry Hopson for contributing to the Antics, all the way from Georgia. -Ed

A Tense Battle at the Queen of Hearts

Game annotated by Sherwood Dong

Sherwood Dong - Ethan J. Smith
(2004) (1674)
50th Queen of Hearts; Round 1
Montgomery, AL; 2-5-2022

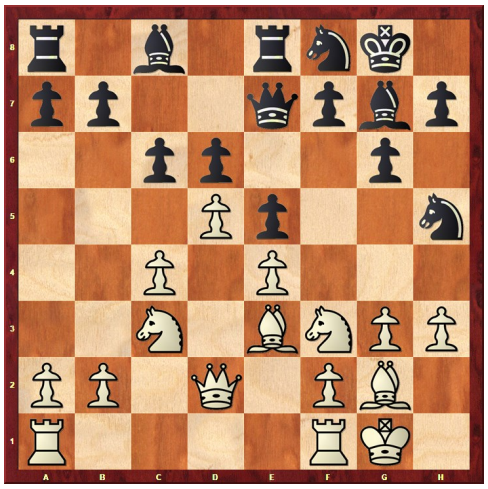
This is interesting. I originally didn't want to submit this game for the *Antics*, but a few things made me change my mind. The first and most foremost thing was that this was the only game I had annotated. I spent one hour and 30 minutes writing everything down, and looking at the other, more profound games that I played in the later rounds I just could not bring myself to do it. I could annotate the game against Zachary Snow, but I lost to touch move, and I couldn't bring myself to review that game any more than I had to. Thinking of all the work I'd have to do, I balked at the prospect of spending precious time annotating my games when I could go to sleep.* The second reason is that this game, besides my game versus State Champion Chibuzo, was the only game where I was tense and calculating a lot. I tried my best to critique both my moves and my opponent's. **1.Nf3 d6 2.d4 Nf6** [2...Bg4 is the move most in the spirit of 1...d6] **3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.c4 0–0 6.0–0 Nbd7 7.Nc3 e5 8.h3 c6 9.e4 Re8**



Both sides follow theory, now I deviate with a bad alternative. **10.d5 Nf8?!** Where is this knight going? In some lines, black plays h6 and Nh7, threatening Ng5 to trade off pieces, but this knight clearly cannot do that. For example, Be3 h6 Qd2 stops that idea in its tracks. With 10...Nc5 11.Qc2 a5 black restrains white's queenside, and is completely equal. I'm actually embarrassed for not seeing this. Or maybe I did, but I subconsciously shunned the possibility of my opponent playing the move due to his lower rating, a

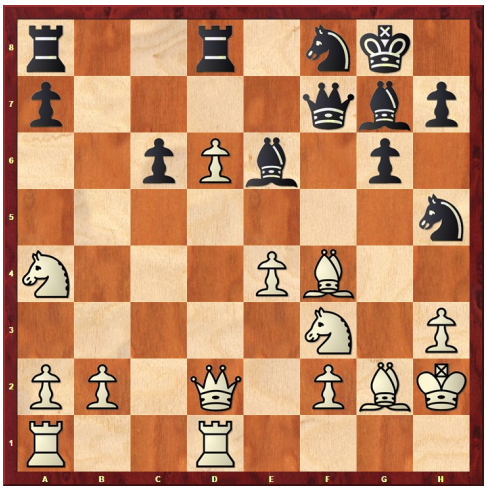
* *"Sleep"? What's this thing called "sleep"? -Ed*

problem I am still trying to fix. **11.Be3 Qe7** A strange move which has no purpose; black can't really make use of the c-file. 11...c5 leads to a worse version of the kings indian type 2 structure but at least black has a clear plan of action here. White should be able to get a good advantage with 12.a3; 11...Nh5 is probably the best move, threatening to play f5. White can't really stop this, so probably 12.Qd2 f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.Rad1 and black has a big pawn center that he can't protect. **12.Qd2** A natural square for the queen. I want to induce black to play c5, closing up the position. Then I might follow up with a3 or Ne1-d3-f4. **12...Nh5** Now this is too late. White wins a pawn by force.



13.dxc6 bxc6 14.Rfd1 Rd8 15.c5 Be6 16.cxd6 Qd7 Now I wanted to play Na4, ignoring Bxh3. Unfortunately, I spent five minutes calculating the variations and could not find anything. Of course, white is still better, but I'd rather keep material. **17.Kh2** [17.Na4 Bxh3 18.Nc5 Qc8 19.d7 Trying to cut off the bishop's connection with the queen doesn't work. 19...Bxd7] **17...f5 18.Na4?!** I played this move very fast, without really looking at the consequences. Much better, and only briefly considered were Ng5 and Bg5. I had plenty of time, and I should have spent that time. 18.Bg5 is best. Black was threatening f4, so getting the bishop away makes sense. Of course, not Bc5, because the knight wants to be on that square. Ng5 is ok, but black can play f4, complicating the position. Now after Bg5 black can block with whatever he wants, but then white can follow up with Na4. Otherwise, white can play Be7. If 18...Bf6 19.Na4 Qe8 20.Nc5 Nd7 21.Na6 white is completely winning. **18...f4!** Activating his pieces instead of suffering slowly is the correct decision. **19.gxf4 exf4 20.Bxf4** [20.Bd4 I considered this move, but: 20...Qxd6 21.Bxg7 Qxd2 and black

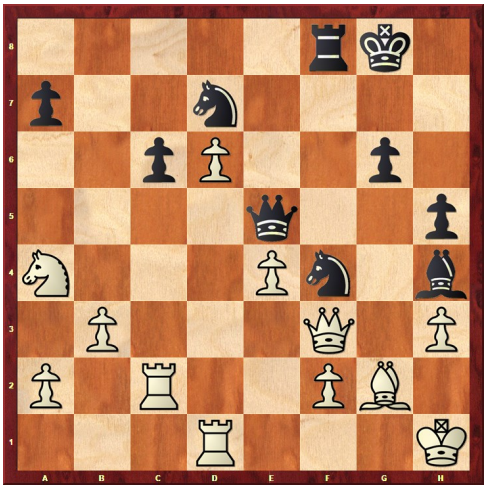
isn't losing anymore. He's still worse, but not losing.] **20...Qf7**



I didn't expect this. I expected 20...Nxf4 21.Qxf4 Bf7. Now Ne6 is threatened, attacking the queen and activating his pieces. 22.Nc5 Ne6 a lot of pieces are being traded off and I wasn't sure I wanted to play that endgame. **21.Bg5** Let's attack his rook. Hopefully, he won't see it. **21...Nd7** He saw it, but didn't care. I spent a lot of time considering Bxd8. I couldn't really see the compensation - I follow up with Ng5 and trade off another pair of minors. **22.Bxd8 Rxd8 23.Ng5 Be5+ 24.Kg1 Qf6** black threatens Bf4, so I take immediately. **25.Nxe6 Qxe6 26.Qg5** Attacking his rook, but I had a plan in mind. I considered 26.Qa5, but I felt that white's kingside was too weak. **26...Bf6 27.Qg4** The point of Qg5. My queen gets in front of my king, offering protection and threatening a queen trade. **27...Qe5**

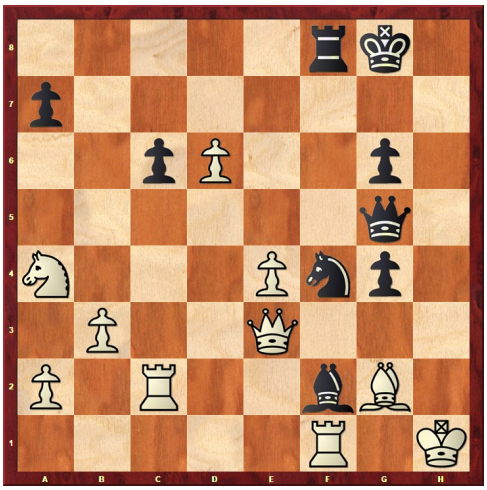
"He saw it, but didn't care."

28.Rac1 Bringing my last piece into the game can't be bad. **28...Nf4!** sacrificing c6. Now I spent 24 minutes on this next move. Should I take on c6? I thought about it. I looked at Rxc6 Qb5. After Qb5 I have a few options, like Rc7. However, he has Ne2+, which drags my queen away after Kh1 Qxa4 Qxe2, and I'm not attacking his bishop. Then I realized that he could just take my a4 knight after Rc7, and I lose a piece since Qxf4 hangs my d1 rook. I spent a lot of time considering h5 followed by Rf8 and Bg5. It made me nervous. **29.b3 h5 30.Qf3 Bh4** I expected Rf8, when I would have played Kh1. I didn't feel like it mattered that much. **31.Kh1 Rf8 32.Rc2**

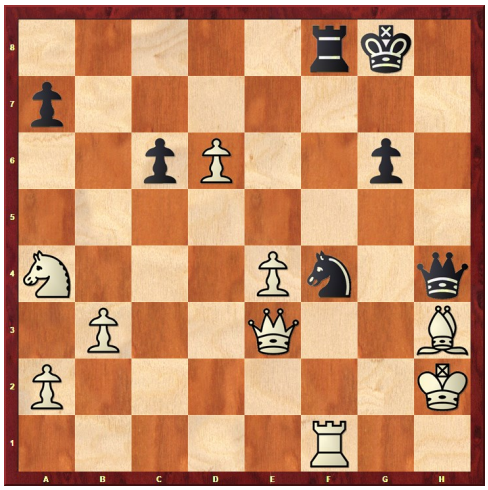


I didn't feel like snatching the c6 pawn. Black's down an exchange, but white certainly isn't feeling great. The hardest part was reassuring myself that black didn't have any discovered attacks. I'm sure that this fact annoyed my opponent greatly. **32...Qg5 33.Rg1 Ne5** This was all expected. Of course we are in another critical position. How do we know? White has a number of squares to move his queen. But each move causes his king to lose a defender, the queen. So, this choice must be made carefully. There are only three candidates, e3, d1, c3. **34.Qe3** I felt this was best, because the alternatives don't make as much sense. 34.Qc3 is probably the easiest to dismiss, and not because of variations. I was confident of my defensive capabilities, and I was planning for when his attack ran out of steam. In this case, the queen is misplaced, and there is a forking square on d2. Additionally, the f2 pawn loses a defender for no reason. On e3 it does everything the queen can do on c3, and more. So there is no reason for this move. 34...Nfd3 This was really annoying. 34.Qd1 is also bad. There is a forking square on f2. Of course, I can push the d-pawn, but I already have a piece out of play, the knight on a4. I can't afford to distract my pieces more. 34...Nfd3 35.Bf1 I saw that Nxf2+ doesn't work, and that black loses the knight, but I still didn't want to play this. It looks too weird. **34...Ng4?** Unfortunately, my opponent isn't Tal. **35.hxg4** I couldn't see the compensation. If Bxf2, then Qxf2 works. For example, if he moves his knight, I just play Qg3. The only thing I thought was dangerous was hxg4, threatening Qh6 and lots of nasty things, maybe Bxf2 and knight moves check winning my queen. I didn't think that he could find it, though. Also, I believed I could just move my rook

and it would be ok. **35...hxg4 36.Rf1 Bxf2**

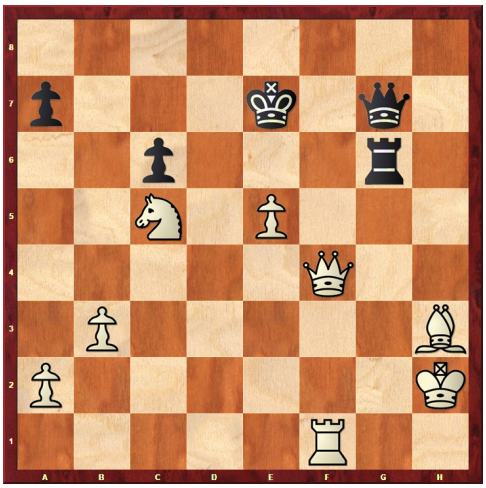


I expected this. Now I knew that Rfxf2 was ok - if he plays g3, then I just play Rf3, transposing into the g3 line earlier. However, I saw Rcxf2, which I thought was stronger - now his knight is triply attacked, so I played Rcxf2. In the case of 36...g3 37.fxg3 Bxg3 38.Rf3 Qh4+ 39.Kg1 Qh2+ 40.Kf1 Nh3 41.Rxf8+ Kxf8 42.d7! black can't make progress. And yes, I did find this while sitting at the board. If he played 36...Qh6 37.Kg1 black doesn't have any good moves. **37.Rcxf2?!** This is actually the best move, but I give it an inaccuracy because it puts me under extreme stress after: **37...g3!** My expression turned really ugly. Now he threatens Qh4+, and I couldn't see a way out except to sac a lot of pieces back. **38.Bh3** The engine says that 38.Rd2 is completely fine. 38...Qh4+ 39.Bh3 Qxh3+ 40.Kg1 and it turns out black can't make progress. For example: 40...g2 *(40...g5 41.Rf3)* 41.Qxh3 Nxh3+ 42.Kxg2. **38...Qh4 39.Rh2** The engine again suggests 39.Rd2 Nxh3 40.Rxf8+ Kxf8 41.Kg2 Nf4+ 42.Kf3 but I wouldn't want to be on the white side here. **39...gxh2** [39...Nxh3? 40.Rxf8+ Kxf8 41.Qf3+ Ke8 42.Rxh3 Qxh3+ 43.Kg1 Qh2+ 44.Kf1 Qxa2 45.e5 Qa1+ 46.Kg2 Qxe5 I could not visualize any further than this. However, white has: 47.Qxc6+] **40.Kxh2**



40…g5 [40...Nxh3 Initially I thought this could draw. For example, 41.Rxf8+ Kxf8 42.Qxh3 Qf2+ 43.Qg2 Qh4+ 44.Kg1 Qe1+ with perpetual

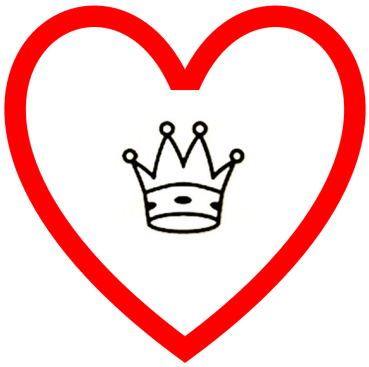
check. However, when I analyzed this, I realized that white wins after 45.Qf1+. It is check, which I didn't see.] **41.Qg3 Qh5 42.Qg4 Qh6 43.Rg1** My opponent is in time pressure, and so am I. Both of us play relatively fast. **43...Qxd6 44.Qxg5+ Kf7 45.Rf1 Ke8 46.Qg3 Qh6 47.Nc5 Rf7 48.Qg8+ Ke7 49.Qg4 Rf6 50.e5 Rg6 51.Qxf4 Qg7**



52.Qf6+ Rxf6 53.exf6+ and **black resigned. 1–0** ■

Sherwood Dong. (Photo by Doug Strout at the 2021 Alabama Quick Chess Championship.)

Editor's note: Congratulations to Sherwood Dong for a strong performance at the Queen of Hearts—finishing just half a point behind the winners—and for breaking into the Expert class earlier this year.



Lessons from a Grandfather to a Grandson

by Charles Anthony

My grandchildren have developed a passing interest in chess. When they get together at our house a chess game is likely to ensue. That is why I left my chess table in the middle of our living room this year. This Thanksgiving we actually held our first Granddaddy-Grandson Simul. My 11-year-old grandson from out of state is staying an extra week with us. He wanted to see some of my old games, so we studied the two that I am submitting for your consideration. The first one was studied because he wanted to see a game with an actual checkmate, since all the others that we looked at ended in resignation. In light of my declining chess abilities, I shouldn't have any trouble keeping my commentary on an 11-year-old level. (Both games have appeared previously in the *Antics*, back in June

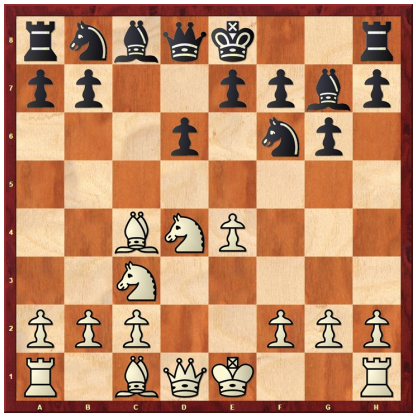
The Granddaddy-Grandson Simul.

Photo courtesy of Charles Anthony.

1982, but without the grandfather's perspective.)

Todd Echols - Charles Anthony
(1475) (1661)
1982 Queen of Hearts Amateur, Rd 1
Montgomery, AL; 2-13-1982

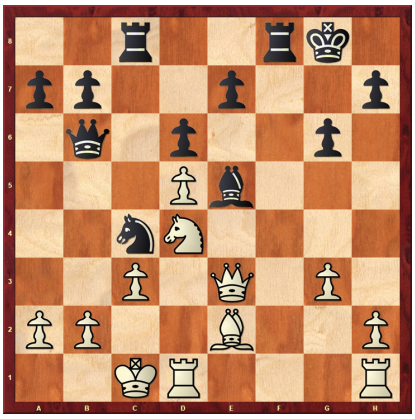
1.e4 c5 I was playing in only my 5th rated tournament. In my previous 4 tournaments I had played 24 rated games. My rating started off at 1664/8 and had been consistently in that range. I had won 12 games, lost 9, and drawn 3. In this tournament I would have the luxury of being able to play my pet opening, the Sicilian Dragon, in 3 of the 5 rounds. At least I had that advantage going for me. **2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Bc4 Bg7**



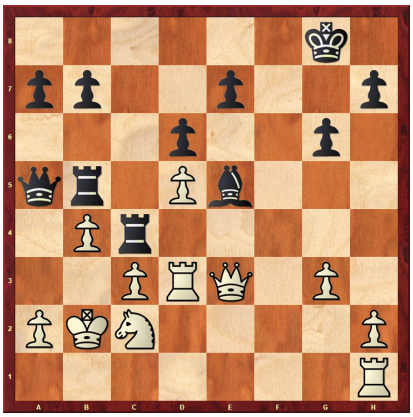
The Dragon. I pointed out to my grandson that this "Dragon Bishop" will be extremely important in this game because of its power on the a1–h8 diagonal. **7.Be3 0–0** White is headed for a Yugoslav Attack setup on the kingside. He will castle on the opposite flank. **8.Qd2 Nc6** Now White will be able to force the exchange of the Dragon Bishop, or at least win the exchange if it retreats to safety at h8. **9.0–0–0 Na5** We are now officially out of any opening book that I know. Definitely didn't like the diagonal that the White bishop was on. **10.Bd3 Ng4** This move is twofold. It attacks the bishop where it sits and prevents the bishop from heading to h6. I pointed out that if White moves the bishop to f4 it allows the dreaded pawn fork at e5.[1] **11.f4 Nxe3** Now the Dragon Bishop will hold sway on the a1–h8 diagonal. **12.Qxe3 Qb6** Doubling up the attack on the knight at d4. **13.Be2 Be6**

1. *Not to mention the immediate ...Bxd4!. -Ed*

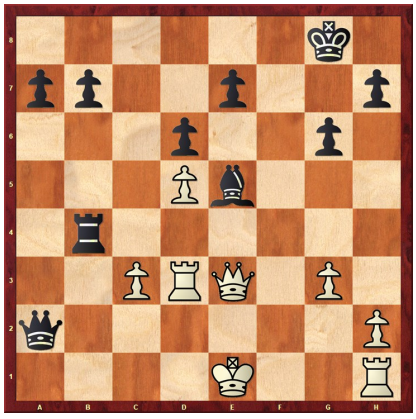
The black bishop is safe from the knight, since its capture would leave the white queen en prise. **14.f5 Bc4 15.Nd5 Bxd5 16.exd5 Be5** Shielding the e-pawn and leaving the bishop in a powerful outpost position. **17.fxg6 fxg6** Expanding the scope of the black rook on f8. **18.g3 Rac8** White prevents the skewer by the bishop at f4, winning the white queen. Black begins a buildup of force on the half-open c-file. **19.c3 Nc4**



20.Bxc4 Rxc4 21.Nc2 Qa5 22.Kb1 Rfc8 Increasing the queenside pressure with the queen, two rooks, and a bishop all bearing down on White's castled king. **23.Rd3 R8c5** Is this a blunder by Black? **24.b4** The dreaded pawn fork, or is it? **24...Rb5 25.Kb2**[2]



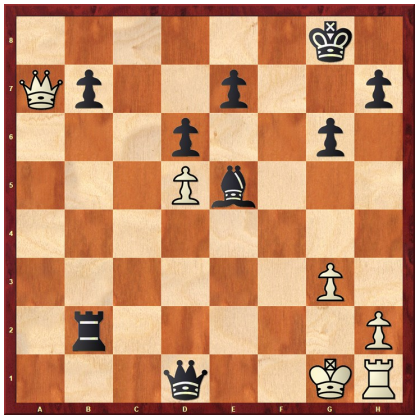
25…Rbxb4+ The white king has stepped into a mating net, facilitated in large part because of the power of the Dragon Bishop and its pin on the c-pawn. Black sacrifices the exchange for the attack. **26.Nxb4 Qxb4+ 27.Kc2 Qa4+ 28.Kb2 Rb4+** There's that pesky Dragon Bishop's influence again. The white king must try to head for safety on the kingside. **29.Kc1 Qa3+ 30.Kd2 Qxa2+ 31.Ke1**



31…Qa1+ There were other ways to keep the king on the run, but this

2. *The computer says this move was the critical error. -Ed*

queen check allows the c-pawn to be captured.[3] **32.Rd1 Bxc3+** Checking with the bishop, instead of allowing a queen exchange, especially with White's material advantage. Black must press on with the attack. **33.Kf2 Qb2+ 34.Kf3 Be5** Black's looming rook move to b3 looks devastating. I suppose that's why the white queen left the area on the next move. **35.Qxa7 Rb3+ 36.Kg4 Qe2+ 37.Kh3 Qh5+ 38.Kg2 Rb2+ 39.Kg1 Qxd1# 0–1**



During the last 15 moves, 14 were checks by Black, made possible in large part because of the coordinated efforts of the black pieces, especially the featured Dragon Bishop. Do you see why I love the Dragon to this day?

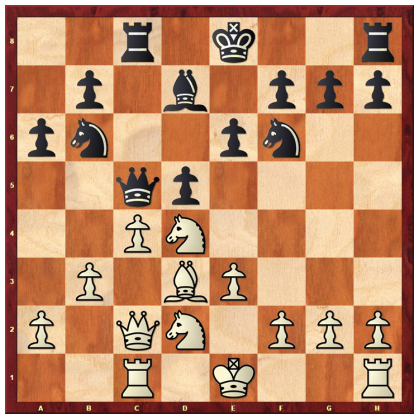
The 2nd round game of the same tournament was another one that we had studied, prior to studying the 1st round game with the actual checkmate that he wanted to see.

Charles Anthony - John Burdette
(1661) (1513)
1982 Queen of Hearts Amateur, Rd 2
Montgomery, AL; 2-13-1982

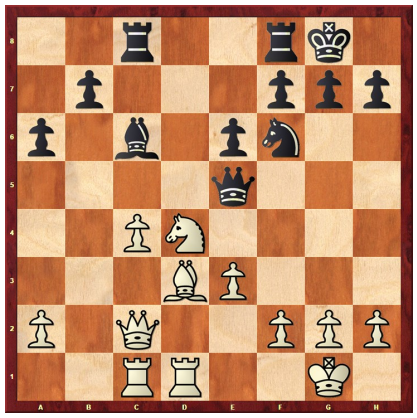
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.e3 Nbd7 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Qc2 c5 7.Bd2 Qc7 8.Rb1 White loses time with the rook move. **8...Nb6 9.Nb5**

9…Bxd2+ The exchanges begin to set the stage for an exciting middle game. **10.Nxd2 Qc6 11.b3 a6 12.dxc5 Qxc5 13.Nd4 Bd7 14.Rc1** It took White 2 moves for the rook to find the correct square. Luckily, this is the Amateur Section, where a loss of tempo is not always so deadly. **14...Rc8 15.Bd3** White finally moves the bishop to allow castling.

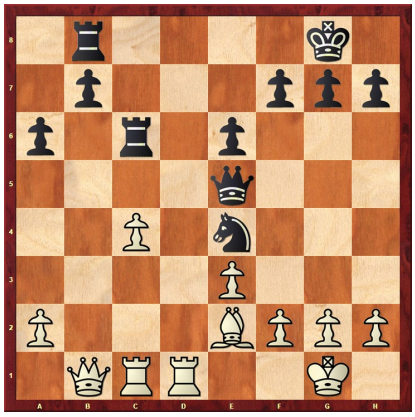
3. *Or 31...Rb1+! 32.Rd1 Rxd1+ 33.Kxd1 Qxd5+ and Qxh1. (Fritz) -Ed*



15...dxc4 16.Nxc4 Nxc4 17.0–0 The knight will still be there for White to capture after the king is moved to safety. **17...0–0 18.bxc4 Bc6** White didn't want to exchange down into a drawn position just yet. At this point we had a discussion about open and half-open files. We plan to make use of them. **19.Rfd1 Qe5**



White's rook on d1 is poised to make good use of the open d file, as soon as the minor pieces move out of his path. **20.Nxc6 Rxc6** Since the black queen moved to e5, the capture with the black rook at c6 disconnects the rooks, which leads to disaster. **21.Qb1 Rb8 22.Be2 Ne4** Even keeping the knight at f6 will not prevent the rook at d1 from threatening a back-rank mate. If only we can get that black rook off the 8th rank.



23.Qxb7 White tempts Black with a queen sacrifice. He doesn't take the bait, but blunders by moving the wrong rook. **23…Rbc8 24.Qxc6 Black resigns (1-0)**. White wins the rook free and clear, or as I stated previously in the '82 Antics, "Black still cannot take the queen."

Who would have dreamed that I would be studying this game with a grandson, nearly 40 years after the fact? I'm glad that I saved all my old scoresheets. Or, maybe this was all part of my master plan from the beginning. ■

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April 16	**Alabama Online Grand Prix**	**chess.com**
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April 23	**Montevallo Blitz**	**Montevallo, AL**

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